

REMARKS

Reconsideration and allowance of the present patent application based on the foregoing amendments and following remarks are respectfully requested.

By this Amendment, claims 4, 5, 7, 10, 12-15 and 20 are amended and claim 2 is cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer to the subject matter therein. No new matter is added. Accordingly, after entry of this Amendment, claims 1 and 3-21 will remain pending in the patent application.

Entry of this Amendment is proper under 37 C.F.R. §1.116 as the amendments: (a) place the application in condition for allowance for the reasons discussed herein; (b) do not present any new issues that would require further consideration and/or search as the amendments merely amplify issues discussed throughout the prosecution; (c) do not present any additional claims without canceling a corresponding number of claims; and (d) place the application in better form for appeal, should an appeal be necessary. Entry of this Amendment is thus respectfully requested.

Applicants would like to express appreciation for the Examiner's indication that claims 1, 3, 6, 8 and 16-19 are allowed.

The Examiner also indicated that claims 4-5, 7 and 9 were objected to but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. In response, claims 4, 5 and 7 are rewritten in independent form. Therefore, claims 4-5 and 7 are allowable. With respect to claim 9, Applicants respectfully that this claim is allowable by virtue of its dependency from claims 1, 3, 4 and 6, which are allowable. Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the objection to claims 4-5, 7 and 9 are respectfully requested.

Claims 2, 10-12, 14-15 and 20-21 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) based on Hansler (U.S. Pat. No. 4,935,668). Claim 13 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) based on Hansler in view of Higashi (U.S. Pat. No. 4,024,425). These rejections are respectfully traversed.

Claim 2 is cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer, thus rendering moot the rejection of claim 2.

Claims 10, 12-15 and 20 are amended to delete their dependency from claim 2. As such, it is respectfully submitted that the amendments to claims 10, 12-15 and 20 obviate the rejection of claims 10-15 and 20-21.

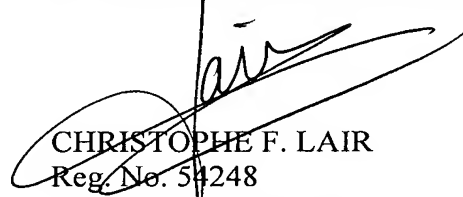
Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections of claims 2, 10-12, 14-15 and 20-21 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) based on Hansler and claim 13 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) based on Hansler in view of Higashi.

Applicants have addressed all the Examiner's rejections and respectfully submit that the application is in condition for allowance. A notice to that effect is earnestly solicited. If any point remains in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, please contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below

Please charge any fees associated with the submission of this paper to Deposit Account Number 033975. The Commissioner for Patents is also authorized to credit any over payments to the above-referenced Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,

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